

Mycophenolate for corneal eye inflammation

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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What is mycophenolate?

Mycophenolate is a drug that can be helpful for people with the inflamed corneal conditions. It was not originally designed to treat this, however, it is now given to patients who have this condition as it has proved to be useful in controlling the symptoms of the illness.

Mycophenolate is available as capsules (250mg) and tablets (500mg).

Mycophenolate is a 'generic medicine'. This means that it is similar to a reference medicine already authorised in the European Union (EU) called Cellcept.

Please note: It is important that you read the manufacturer's leaflet as well as this one because it contains general information about the drug that you will need to know. However, please remember that some of the information in it may not be relevant to you.

Why have I been given mycophenolate?

You have been given this drug to improve your eye condition. It is not a pain reliever and doesn't work rapidly, but it tends to improve the symptoms over a longer period of time.

If you are on painkillers or anti-inflammatory drugs, it is important that you should continue to take them unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
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How will mycophenolate help me?

Mycophenolate works by suppressing inflammation, by acting on certain cells in the immune system.

What dose of mycophenolate should I take?

Mycophenolate is usually taken twice a day. You should take them whole with a glass of water. Do not break or crush them. Do not take any that are broken or split. Your doctor will advise you about the exact dose.

Are there any side effects?

All drugs have side effects, although most patients do not experience any. Side effects include:

- Diarrhoea
- Being sick (vomiting)
- Stomach ache
- Headache
- Shaking (tremor)
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- Dizziness

Is there anything I should look out for?

If you have any of the following symptoms, call your doctor immediately:

- Unexplained bruising or bleeding
- Blood in your vomit
- Blood in your diarrhoea or black, tarry stools
- Fever

Please tell your doctor or specialist nurse if you develop any new symptoms. Regular blood tests will allow us to monitor you and manage any of these rarer side effects should they happen.

Please note: it is very important for you to attend for regular blood tests. You must not take mycophenolate unless you are having regular checks.

Can I take other drugs or medicines along with mycophenolate?

Some drugs may interact with mycophenolate. You should always tell any doctor treating you that you are taking mycophenolate. You should not take 'over the counter' preparations without discussing first with your doctor or pharmacist.

If you need a vaccine (immunisation), you must tell your GP that you are on this medication as some 'live' vaccines should not be given to patients on mycophenolate.

These include:

- Oral polio
- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- Yellow fever
- BCG (Tuberculosis)
- Oral typhoid

The following immunisations are not 'live' and can be given although they may be less effective whilst you are on this drug:

- Hepatitis (A and B)
- Flu (influenza)
- Absorbed diphtheria (low dose) and tetanus vaccines for adults and adolescents
- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Hib (Haemophilus Influenza B)
- Typhoid
- Meningococcal vaccines

Can I start a family whilst on mycophenolate?

Whether you are a man or a woman on mycophenolate if you want to start a family, you should talk to your doctor as soon as possible as you may need to come off your medication.

If you decide to stop taking mycophenolate so you can start a family, you will need to continue to have protected sex for 6 weeks after you come off your medication. Talk to your GP about effective forms of contraception.

If you are a woman on mycophenolate and think you might be pregnant, you should see your GP for advice.

Can I drink alcohol while taking mycophenolate?

Food or drink have no influence on your treatment, however it can cause tummy problems (gastrointestinal irritation).

Is there anything else I should avoid while taking this?

You should avoid being out in the sun for long periods at a time and wear protective clothing, sunglasses and sunscreen SPF 15 or above. Mycophenolate may make your skin sensitive to sunlight and can therefore increase your chance of skin cancer. Do not use sun beds.

You should avoid contact with anyone who has chickenpox or shingles especially if you haven't had these infections. If you develop either you should stop taking your medication and seek medical advice promptly. If you have any concern about your treatment, you should discuss this with your doctor or nurses practitioner.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not double the dose. Do not take any more within 10 hours. Try to keep to regular times to minimise missing doses.

Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns or questions about this treatment you can contact:

Corneal Nurse Specialist:	07506 827360 / 07970 940125
Eye Casualty Department:	0116 258 6273
Ophthalmology Secretary:	0116 258 5918

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